

28 June 1984

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Dear Fred:

My belated thanks for sending me your article. The essay indeed does make some very important points. I only hope that it gets a wide readership among so-called Soviet experts. I just don't know how many of them read Technology Review. In this regard, have you seen Mike Joyce's article on "The Old Russian Legacy" in the Summer of 1984 issue of Foreign Policy? I find it absolutely awful. Is there any possibility that you could rework your article either for Foreign Policy or Foreign Affairs, both as an antedote to Joyce's and as a contribution to our knowledge in its own right.

The only point on which I would take issue with you is in your description of the state of the economy. I quite agree that we should not talk about it in apocalyptic terms. At the same time, I think Soviet leaders are deeply worried about the economy and particularly about the negative and potentially dangerous affects that the stagnating standard of living is or could have on the working class. During our conference [redacted] you brought out quite well the Soviet unease that Solidarity could have a spillover effect into the Soviet Union. By now you have probably seen the prolonged discussion in Soviet scholarly journals about "contradictions" under socialism and more recently two amazing articles in Voprosy Istoryy -- the first piece praising Krushchev's emphasis on consumer goods and the second Lenin's NEP. I think all these articles point to a realization among at least some scholars and probably among some political leaders that something must be done about economic organization and priorities. Whether anything will actually be done is open to question but I think the concern is greater than you suggest in your article. That would be my one reservation, and I do hope you can get your analysis published in a more widely read journal.

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With warm regards,

  
George Kolt